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Report on the Slovakian Committee for Liberation
(slovakische Befreiungskomitee) and the
Slovakian National Council

The Slovakian Emigration

In order to judge the so-called Slovakian emigration in Europe and overseas, consideration must be given to several questions, without knowledge of which it is impossible to place in logical inter-relationship the various matters connection with the entire European emigration.

Within the Slovakian emigration are two main groups:

- a) The Slovakian Committee for Liberation, created and led by Dr. Ferdinand DURCANSKY.
- b) The Slovakian National Council, created and led by Dr. Karol SIDOR.

Both Dr. DURCANSKY and Dr. SIDOR have been marked figures in Slovakian politics for the last twenty years. Both personalities played a decisive role in the genesis of the independent Slovakian state (14 March 1939).

The positions taken by these two Slovakian politicians in their fight for the freedom of their people were different. Although Dr. DURCANSKY was a thoroughly convinced follower of the HLINKA Guard and a leading exponent of the Catholic student youth movement founded by Pater HLINKA (which gradually gathered together in the so-called Nastup Circle), he can be adjudged as a great realist in politics, possessed of great elasticity which permitted him to yield in superficial matters (including German suggestions about the establishing of the Slovakian state). The dispute of DURCANSKY, in the summer of 1940 (?) with HITLER and RIENSTROP at Obersalzberg, which led to his resignation as Foreign Minister, Minister of the Interior, and deputy Minister President, proves that this elasticity was not without limits and that the frequently raised accusation of pro-Germanism does not have too much significance. Dr. DURCANSKY was and is a Slovakian, above all else; he rejected the Pan-Slavic idea, which had also been growing within Slovakia for thirty years, although he was also convinced of the necessity for cooperation among all peoples in Middle Europe.

Dr. Karol SIDOR was frequently named by Pater HLINKA, in his political testament, as his successor to leadership of the Slovakian state (although no documentary proof for this assertion was submitted to ZIPPER). SIDOR has certain definite conceptions which, for some time, were made the basis for charges of treason against his people. At the decisive hour he at least "played cards" with BELES about the founding of the Slovakian state, and for this reason he was not included in the first cabinet of that state. Instead he was sent to Rome as Slovakian representative at the

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Vatican and there played an important part until 1945. (He was, however, frequently attacked on the grounds that he failed to represent the conception of an independent Slovakia). Although SIDOR is anti-communistic and was the esteemed co-worker of Pater HLINKA, leader of the Slovakian people until 1939, he entertains pan-slavic concepts. His pro-Polish political attitude occasioned much distrust of him in German political circles. He never made a secret of being pro-Polish, and it is not remarkable that this tendency is strong in him today. Before his eyes there is always an image of a Greater Slavic State, grouped around Poland, which would disassociate itself from Bolshevism in the East, which would move toward a confederative framework taking in all Czechs and Slovaks in the West and Southwest, and which would at least maintain close ties with the Catholic section of the Southern Slavs (Croatia and Slovakia). For the formulation of his present ideas the concept of a block of Catholic states under the leadership of Poland, and including Hungary in this area of Slavic influence, is decisive. The extent to which he is working under the auspices of the Vatican cannot be determined from here.

These variant positions of the two leaders of the Slovakian emigration in Europe and America is not only the result of differing hypotheses imbedded in the structure of their movements but also has variant practical effects within Slovakia today. The Pan-Slavic concept and the pro-Polish political attitude were always espoused, for the most part, by the Slovakian intelligentsia, who feared and rejected Bolshevism, but who recognized that it would not suffice to protect only the Czechs. Because Russia was "pining away" under Bolshevism, they turned their eyes toward the (then) free Poles. Because only the intelligentsia were here concerned, the number of persons moving in this intellectual-political direction (the SIDOR concept) was small. Dr. DURCANSKY, on the other hand, has many more followers and ties to the Slovakian people. DURCANSKY has rejected the SIDOR concept, because all brother-states of Slovakia, much like the Czechs, have seen this territory only as a source of booty. The logic of this attitude can also be seen in the annexation by the Poles of certain parts of Slovakia (Orava and Javorina) in 1938.

It may be true that SIDOR has today the support of the majority of the intellectuals. DURCANSKY, however, can count on the support of all those who today stand in closest contact, shoulder-to-shoulder, with the Slovakian homeland and people, who, in the majority, wish for nothing more earnestly than the reconstitution of an independent Slovakian state associated with a new middle-European group of states freed from the influence of Bolshevism.

History of Dr. Ferdinand DURCANSKY until 1945

Dr. Ferdinand DURCANSKY was born on 18 December 1906 in Rajec, Slovakia. His father, Juraj DURCANSKY, a farmer-delegate to various

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regional bodies and enthusiastic co-worker of the leading Slovakian fighter and leader of the people, Pater HLINKA, appeared in the former battle within the CSR as a senator representing the Hlinka Slovakian People's Party, H.S.L.S. The Vatican held the father in especially high esteem because of his upright stand in matters concerning the defense of the Catholic Church in Slovakia. After graduating from the Gymnasium, Dr. Ferdinand DURCANSKY attended the University of Bratislava, the Sorbonne in Paris, and in Der Haag, until he returned to Bratislava and completed the work on his doctorate. For a time he worked as an assistant on the faculty of law in the University of Bratislava. But the Czech government made it impossible for him to make representations to acquire the right of giving lectures at the university as a qualified teacher (by a decision of the Ministry of Information in Prague). Only after the upheaval in 1939 was Dr. DURCANSKY able to acquire this right and give lectures as an instructor (Privatdozent) on international law in the University of Bratislava.

While a student he took an active part in student affairs. He was esteemed as the co-founder of the Catholic People's Party and brought together certain circles of young Slovakian students in the organization called "Nastup". Together with his brother, Dr. Jan DURCANSKY, born 16 February 1902 in Rajec, lawyer and front-line fighter in the HLINKA Party and HLINKA Movement, and notary public in Bratislava, Dr. Ferdinand DURCANSKY brought out the newspaper "Nastup", which played a decisive role with the younger Slovakian generation as the printed expression of their will to fight for an independent Slovakia through propagation of the idea of autonomy.

After 6 October 1938 Dr. Ferdinand DURCANSKY, who was still governed by Prague, became the Minister of Justice for the autonomous Slovakia. On 11 March 1939 he also became Foreign Minister for Slovakia, and in October 1939 he was entrusted with the leadership of the Slovakian Ministry of the Interior. At the same time he became deputy minister president and thus concentrated in his own hands a great deal of political power. The accusations of his opponents were raised very soon; to the German office concerned false information was supplied, charging that DURCANSKY was working on both sides of the street and constantly maintaining contacts with hostile powers. It is true that the connections of DURCANSKY to compatriots in America never were terminated.

Because of an emotional conference with HITLER and RIBBENTROP at Obersalzberg, Dr. DURCANSKY was barely able to escape arrest. All of his offices were taken from him (in 1940?) and, under close observation, he went back to Bratislava and resumed his legal practice and private business (building up his interests in Slovakian industry - chemical works in Leopoldov).

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Dr. Ferdinand DURCANSKY's Life and Political Work since 1945

Along with many other Slovakian politicians and personalities of Slovakian public life, Dr. DURCANSKY moved westward as the Russians marched in from the east. He first went to Kremsmuenster, where the Slovakian government, with Dr. TISO, remained until shortly before the advent of the American troops. As DURCANSKY moved further west, an American office impounded a drug which, to my own knowledge, was morphium) that he had taken from his own chemical properties in Leopoldov and that was his personal property. Part of this drug was returned to him by the Americans. Meanwhile the Czechs had gotten out a warrant naming Dr. DURCANSKY a war-criminal, so that he had to disappear into an illegal existence. In 1945/1946 he kept changing his residence from Switzerland to Italy to France. At the first conference, in 1946, Dr. DURCANSKY supplied three memoranda, even though the police were close behind him. These memoranda supported the re-creation of an independent Slovakian state and concerned the following questions:

I. Legal continuity of an independent Slovakian state (Dr. TUKA, in his fight against Hungary and the Czechs, had used the same argument and had supported it factually).

II. Necessity for concluding a peace treaty with Slovakia to normalize the relationships between states.

III. Conducting a plebiscite within the former Slovakian republic. In this way substance would be given to the desire of the Slovakian people for an independent state.

At the end of 1946 or the beginning of 1947 Dr. DURCANSKY went to Argentina, partly to shake off his persecutors and partly in the hope that he would have more success in proselytizing for the Slovakian concept in America. (The conference in Paris, at the wish of President BENES, had not concerned itself with the memoranda which DURCANSKY submitted.) He took up residence in Buenos Aires, where to this date can be found the headquarters of the so-called Slovakian Committee for Liberation (Slovakische Befreiungskomitee). At the same time he is making efforts to establish a secret transmitter to build up and support the efforts of his compatriots at home to fight Bolshevism. The secret transmitter has the name "Barcelona".

DURCANSKY and SIDOR

In 1945 Dr. DURCANSKY looked up Dr. SIDOR in Rome, to win SIDOR over to an active fight in the homeland and to the idea of an independent Slovakia. SIDOR declined with the explanation, "The idea of an independent Slovakia has been so discredited by association with the defense pact with the German Reich that one cannot be a representative of such a conception. One must seek another concept, by means of which, perhaps, common cause can be made with Poland. But the time is so not ripe for this idea."

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deliver to the Czechs the leading figures of the former Slovakian state (insofar as this has not happened already). Moreover, one must concentrate now on giving social help to the young, post-1945, Slovakian political emigration." DURCANSKY opposed this concept with his suggestion for creating a political organization which would convince the rest of the world of the good qualities of Slovakia. DURCANSKY founded the so-called "Slovakian Organization Office", to which SIDOR was to give only monetary help, because SIDOR still had charge of state funds accrued during the period of Slovakian independence and intended for protection against an eventual endangering of independent Slovakia through the outcome of the war. (The principal purpose of this fund was to provide the means to renew, if need be, the fight for Slovakian independence.) SIDOR refused this help. Thereupon DURCANSKY turned to the highly esteemed and financially strong "Slovakian League" in America; but the League was on the side of SIDOR and had been instructed by him to make only slight financial support available to DURCANSKY, because SIDOR recognized very clearly the growing influence of his rival of former times. In this connection it should be pointed out that it was naturally easy for SIDOR, because of his work with the Vatican, to maintain uninterrupted contact with America. It is interesting that SIDOR had also taken his stand against an independent Slovakia in his publications in the U.S.A. and had always (including the period during the war) represented instead the concept of a merger with Poland.

The Founding of the Slovakian National Committee and the Slovakian Committee for Liberation

In December 1948 Dr. Karol SIDOR founded the "Slovakian National Council Abroad". This was the first experience of the Slovakian emigration with a widespread organization and far-flung organizational net. Headquarters was established in Rome, where the organization was financially supported by the funds mentioned above and also by the growing contributions of the Slovaks in America, the "Slovakian League". Since then SIDOR has emigrated to Canada, where a part of the Slovakian intelligentsia has gathered around him. In this fashion it may be that Canada has taken the leadership away from the headquarters in Rome. As representatives abroad SIDOR chose the following:

Rome - Dr. Karol SIDOR

London - (Dr.) FRIDAVCK (announcer with the Czechoslovakian radio in London during the war. Later held decisively aloof from the Czechoslovakian government in exile. Still thought of today in certain Slovakian circles as not wholly dependable).

Argentina - Dr. Ferdi and DURCANSKY

Germany - (Dr.) Josef DURCANSKY - last chief editor of the "Slovakian People's Party" in the Slovak Republic.

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Meanwhile, however, Dr. Ferdinand DURCANSKY had already created his "Slovakian Committee of Liberation". From his standpoint, accordingly, he does not recognize the priority or precedence of the National Council of SIDOR and supports the following changes:

The committee is to be composed of 75 representatives.

Of these, 25 are to come from the National Council of SIDOR.

25 are to come from the Committee of Liberation of DURCANSKY.

25 are to be freely elected.

A recognized personality, a member of neither group, to be chairman of the committee.

This suggestion was refused by SIDOR for enlightening reasons.

When Dr. PAUCU left Germany in 1949, SIDOR named Dr. HOLY his successor. But HOLY also emigrated, to Australia. Since that date (1950) the former Slovakian consul in Berlin, (Dr. Matus CERNAK, has been recognized as leader for Germany. In addition, the following have joined SIDOR's ranks: Dr. Konstantin GULEN, who from 1946 on was interned by the Americans in various camps; and (Dr.) (fnu) CAVCJA, former secretary of the minister-president Dr. TUKA, who was interned by the Americans and released in 1947 and who lived in the Tyrol until 1949 or 1950, when he emigrated to Canada.

The following persons, among others, belong to the Slovakian Committee of Liberation:

South America (chiefly Argentina) - Dr. Jan DURCANSKY, brother of Dr. Ferdinand DURCANSKY

(fnu) DILONO (Slovakian writer).

(Professor) (fnu) MEETAR

(Lt. Col.) (fnu) LEDNICKY (chaplain)

(Dr.) (fnu) ONDEUSKA (successor to Dr. KAPVAS with the NUZ)

(Dr.) ZATKO (writer; pseudonym: "Bor")

London:

(Engineer) (fnu) PAZOVSKY

Oktav PAZOVSKY (the only one of the family of the gifted Slovakian PAZOVSKY family).

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USA

Professor fnu BARTEK (former chief of the Slovakian statistical office)

Dr. (fnu) BRAUNNECKER

Germany (Dr.) Ctibor POKORNY

After the Slovakian secret transmitter "Barcelona" was set up, Dr. F. DURCANSKY arranged for putting a second station in business. Formerly this second station transmitted twice a week; since January 1951 it has broadcasts thrice weekly. Among broadcasting times are Tuesdays and Fridays at 1245 hours on a short wave band of 40 m.

Dr. F. DURCANSKY is presently travelling in the U.S. and Canada. He intends to return to Europe in the spring of 1951 and to settle permanently in Paris or London.

The Political Concepts of DURCANSKY and SIDOR

DURCANSKY has always favored the concept of an independent Slovakia. Should the time make such a plan now impractical, then he pleads the cause of an independent Middle European federation of the Slovakian people, grouped into one state.

Because of its political position the Slovakian Committee of Liberation has good connections with the following international organizations (among others):

"Anti-bolshevistic Bloc of Nations" (ABN), the largest international anti-bolshevistic organization.

"Organization for Moral Rearmament"

"Scottish League for European Freedom"

"American Friends of Slovakian Freedom"

There are also good connections with the movement of General de GAULLE.

SIDOR, true to his old principles, works chiefly with circles of Polish anti-bolshevistic emigrants. He represents his old plan: creating a Slavic confederation grouped around Poland and including Czechs and Slovaks as well as cooperation with Croats and Slovenes. SIDOR also favors international cooperation of the Slovakian National Council in the Central European Federalists Club.

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SIDOR also favors a Polish eastern border based on that created after the first world war and a western boundary at the Oder and Neisse.

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